



**Montana DNRC Forested Trust Lands HCP
Annual Update to USFWS
2/28/2014
DNRC Southwestern Land Office Conference Room
Final Meeting Notes**

Present:

Tim Bodurtha	USFWS
Ross Baty	DNRC
Gary Frank	DNRC
Sonya Germann	DNRC
Amy Helena	DNRC
Jeff Schmalenberg	DNRC
Chris Shank	DNRC

Annual Monitoring Commitments for Aquatics

- Gary walked Tim through each of the annual reporting requirements for the Aquatics conservation strategies in the Annual Update. The following bulleted items summarize the results. A complete summary of year two Aquatic Commitments can be found in the Annual Update.
 - ✓ 1 acre of RMZ allowance was used in the Blackfoot AAU during the reporting period. The actual area affected was less than an acre.
 - ✓ 9.7 total acres of RMZ harvest took place 2013.
 - ✓ Monitoring activities within RMZ/SMZ harvest have been difficult because DNRC is in most cases not harvesting in these areas.
- Gary discussed the current status of Road Tracking. The following road activities were included in timber sale contracts sold from January 1, 2013-December 31, 2013:
 - ✓ **25.6 miles** of permanent road construction
 - ✓ **10.9 miles** of temporary road construction
 - ✓ **4.6 miles** of road reclamation
 - ✓ **0 miles** of road abandonment
 - ✓ **11.1 miles** of road reconstruction
 - ✓ **61.9 miles** Best Management Practices (BMP) Upgrades
 - ✓ **49.4 miles** BMP maintenance
- DNRC continues to make progress in developing tools to track roads. Tim had the following comments in regards to road tracking and DNRC will take them into consideration during development of road tracking tools:
 - ✓ GIS road updates should take place annually so cumulative effects among multiple ownerships can be properly tracked.
 - ✓ Maps could be generated to better display changes in road systems annually.
- Year two aquatic commitments were successfully implemented



Applying HCP commitments to Thompson River Grazing Association

- Jeff Schmalenberg introduced a proposal that would utilize a matrix in order to comply with DNRC Administrative Rules as well as HCP commitments.
 - ✓ This matrix would use a coarse filter approach to analyze grazing management plans for the parcels. If riparian areas are identified as degraded, DNRC would work closely with grazing operator to verify conditions, apply corrective actions as necessary, and monitor the effectiveness.
 - ✓ This approach is different than the approach outlined in the HCP, however, the structure of the Thompson River Grazing Co-op is different than any other grazing license in the HCP project area.
 - ✓ At first glance Tim thought it was a good proposal. Even though the process is slightly different it allows DNRC to meet the intent of the HCP. Tim outlined the next steps Jeff needed to follow to get formal approval from USFWS:
 - ▲ Develop a Cooperative Management Response (CMR). This response will be in the form of a letter to the USFWS outlining the 1.) Issue 2.) Solution and 3.) Asking for concurrence. The CMR then needs to be made a formal part of the implementation manual to ensure it gets applied appropriately and consistently into the future.

Redd Trampling Study

- DNRC has developed a proposal for an approach to completing this monitoring requirement.
 - ✓ Using GIS and field reconnaissance parcels were prioritized based on potential for risk of Redd Trampling.
 - ✓ Priority 1-3 were identified (priority 1 being the most likely to be at risk of Redd Trampling) based on:
 - ▲ If the effected stream contains spawning reaches
 - ▲ The quality of the spawning reaches
 - ▲ Terrain limits access by livestock to spawning reaches
 - ▲ If the spawning reaches are known to have low utilization
 - ✓ Tim was in general supportive of this approach and identified follow-up work that be needed to ensure this approach would meet the intent of the commitment:
 - ▲ Determine the extent of priority 1 parcels by individual fish species.
 - ▲ Submit an initial proposal to USFWS for review

Implementation Tools & Training

- Amy walked Tim through the Training section of the Annual Update document and the various training tools and checklists for HCP Implementation.
- Summaries of this information can be found in the Annual Update.

Transition Lands Strategy

- There were no HCP parcel disposals during the reporting period.
- Improvements have been during this reporting period to better track when DNRC Trust Lands parcels are sold/traded. Measures are in place to ensure the DNRC Forest Management Planner is made aware of land transactions and can then immediately notify USFWS of possible HCP parcel disposals.



Grizzly Bear Annual Monitoring Commitments

- Ross walked Tim through each of the annual reporting requirements in the Grizzly Bear table in the Annual Update. The following bulleted items summarize the results. A complete reporting of Grizzly Bear Commitments applied during year two that require annual review are presented in the Annual Update.
 - ✓ USFWS approved a bear training video to meet commitment GB-PR1.
 - ✓ Over 123 DNRC employees have viewed the video. This included foresters as well as administrators, resources specialists, Trust Lands Management Division employees working in other programs that occasionally participate in implementing covered Forest Management Activities, and some fire staff.
 - ✓ Bear presence signs were approved by the USFWS and purchased for the Swan and Stillwater Units. Twenty Four signs were constructed at a cost of \$3,860 (not including hardware to hang signs). During the 2013 operating 5 signs were installed on the Swan River State Forest. The One of these signs was vandalized within the first 6 months of being posted. The remaining signs to be posted will be installed during the 2014 field season.
 - ✓ Baseline open road amounts on scattered lands showed little change compared to last year's results (1st annual report). The Anaconda Unit showed appreciable decrease in open road amounts in non-recovery occupied habitat areas due to improved road closures and data updating.
 - ✓ DNRC continues to make progress in recovery zone closure monitoring. Closers continue to be prioritized for repair and monitored for effectiveness. During the reporting period 320 primary closures were checked (not including closures on the Swan River State Forest). 23 were ineffective at restricting illegal motorized access. Closure effectiveness for each Unit office ranged from 88% to 96% and averaged 93% overall. Repairs will be scheduled for 22 closures during the 2014 field season and an additional closure will be replaced in conjunction with an ongoing timber sale project within the next two years. Approximately 200 additional closures are checked annually on the Swan River State Forest and those results are reported each year in the Swan Monitoring Report.
 - ✓ DNRC is in compliance with the Stillwater Transportation Plan commitments.
 - ▲ Maps were refined and corrected to show more detail in legends.
 - ▲ USFWS approved the corrections.
 - ▲ DNRC has adopted this map as the final, corrected, clean version (vers. September 26, 2013) for implementation.
- Year two grizzly bear commitments were successfully implemented

Lynx Annual Monitoring Commitments

- Ross walked Tim through the annual reporting requirements for Canada lynx that are provided in tables attached to the Annual Update. The following bulleted items summarize some the results. The complete record of annual reporting requirements for Lynx Commitments and results for the reporting period can be found in the Annual Update.
 - ✓ Lynx Habitat comparison of amounts present at the end of this monitoring period with baseline habitat amounts calculated in 2012.
 - ▲ DNRC will submit tables instead of maps at future annual meeting to document updating changes and verify compliance with required habitat parameters. Tables are adequate and the most appropriate means of reporting changes in habitat amounts and compliance at the programmatic level. Maps will be provided to the USFWS upon request.



- ▲ USFWS approved the general use of tables instead of maps to present information at annual meetings.
- ✓ Ross discussed the management plan that was developed for the Clearview Timber Sale. This timber sale is taking place in the Seeley Lake LMA. When the ITP was signed the LMA was at less than 65% suitable habitat as a result of the Jocko Lakes Fire. The management plan was developed to mitigate impacts to Lynx in the LMA and was approved by the USFWS during this reporting period. As a part of this mitigation plan, suitable lynx habitat would not be reduced below the existing level of 61% in this LMA.
- Year two lynx commitments were successfully implemented

Proposed New Listings -- yellow-billed cuckoo, wolverine and fisher

- Ross discussed three species that are proposed for listing and what impacts that might have to the HCP.
- Upon listing USFWS and DNRC would follow the protocol outlined in the HCP. USFWS would provide notification of requirements and procedures to DNRC as necessary.

HCP Biodiversity field reviews

- Ross discussed the biodiversity field reviews that took place last fall.
 - ✓ There were two projects reviewed, but one had relatively few HCP issues present (McNamara Landing Timber Sale MSO Unit). Relatively few projects were available for review this period because most projects developed following adoption of the HCP have not yet had logging activities completed.
 - ✓ Ross has improved the forms and may continue to look at ways to make the forms more efficient and relevant. Any revisions will be forwarded to the USFWS for review and approval.
 - ✓ Tim was in support of making field forms more efficient.
 - ✓ Ross reiterated the importance and benefits of having the USFWS present on the tours. Tim concurred.
 - ✓ Amy is going to try to schedule the reviews soon to foster participation and efficacy of the tours.

Errors, exceptions, new science, climate change and closing comments

- Errors, exceptions
 - ✓ None Identified during discussion.
- New Science
 - ✓ The following new science was discussed during the meeting:
 - ▲ Conservation Strategy for Bull Trout on USFS lands in Western Montana" (USDA May 2013).
 - ▲ Lynx Critical Habitat Designation -- USFWS contact Jim Zelenak. DNRC has been in contact with Jim and provided comments on the latest designation proposal to the USFWS
 - ▲ Quantifying grizzly bear selection of natural and anthropogenic edges offers evidence of attraction to edges associated with logging units and roads vs. other studies that have detected avoidance of these features. (Stewart et al. 2013.)

Stewart. b.P., T.A. Nelson, K. Laberee, S.E. Nielsen, M.A. Wulder, and G. Stenhouse. 2013. Quantifying grizzly bear selection of natural and anthropogenic edges. Journal of Wildlife Management, 77(5):957-964.



- Climate Change
 - ✓ The group discussed the Daniel Isaac climate change blog.
 - ✓ Gary will send a link to the blog available for other Forest Management Bureau Staff.

Compliance with ITP

- Based on the updates at the annual meeting, the draft annual report and continued communication with the USFWS it was ascertained that the DNRC is complying with the requirements and terms of the HCP.